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#### ABSTRACT

This issue of the children's quarterly magazine, "The Goldfinch," focuses on newspapers in Iowa's history. Articles address Iowa's pioneer press, a tiny newspaper published by a pair of Iowa brothers, and handwritten newspapers. Activities, fictional accounts, and nonfictional articles address the importance of newspapers in Iowa's past and present. One article explains how newspapers were produced with typesetting and Linotype. Other articles discuss the importance of accuracy and reliability in the stories newspapers tell and record for history, the contributions of Iowa's first African-American newspaper, "Colored Advance," in 1882, and subsequent African-American newspapers in Iowa. An article by the winner of the 1997 "Write Women Back into History Contest," Abby Cox, is also included. (EH)



**Iowa History for Young People** 

Volume 18, Number 4, Summer 1997

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PRICE PIVE CO

Sections



Today



### I am your newspaper . . .

bring you every day the current history of the past 24 hours in type and pictures. On my pages you will find recorded the
doings of folks of every walk of life. I reflect the views and
opinions of all people. I respect these views and opinions.
Eliminate me from the daily scheme of things and what would be
left? How would people be kept informed? How could people be
kept informed about merchandise for sale in the stores, without
the newspaper? How would a man or woman find a job without a
newspaper, or an employer get suitable help? People do not
have to be anywhere at any specific time to read me. I am
available at almost any corner drug store, at railroad and bus
depots, in libraries, schools. I also come delivered to your
residences."

In 1953, the Council Bluffs *Non-Pariel* celebrated National Newspaper Week by publishing the article excerpted above.

The *Non-Pariel* is just one of many lowa newspapers that share in the state's strong journalism tradition. This tradition began in 1836 when lowa's first newspaper, the *Du Buque Visitor*, was published. Although newspapering in lowa has experienced many changes in the last 160 years, newspapers continue to provide vital services to the state by informing and entertaining the readers of lowa.

To give you the scoop on newspapers in lowa's history, we checked out tons of papers from the state's past. We prepared articles about lowa's pioneer press, a tiny paper published by a pair of lowa brothers, and handwritten newspapers. You'll discover how newspapers serve their communities. When you need a break from reading, make an authentic press operator's hat and solve our tricky type puzzle. Then hang out with a group of lowa students who researched the history of their town by reading old copies of their community's newspaper.

When you're finished reading about newspapers in this issue of *The Goldfinch*, check out the newspaper that serves YOUR mmunity! — The Editor

## **Göldfinch**

Volume 18, Number 4 Summer 19997



Winner of a 1995 Parents' Choice Honor Award

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The Goldfinch is also available on cassette tape for the blind, the visually impaired, the physically handicapped, and the learning disabled. For more information contact the lowa Department for the Blind, 1-800-362-2587. Or write to the lowa Department for the Blind Library, 524 4th St., Des Moines 50309.

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#### Saving Iowa's papers

### The Iowa Newspaper Project



If you've ever held old newspapers in your hands, you know how fragile history can be. For more than 100 years, the State Historical

Society of lowa has collected and bound or microfilmed the state's newspapers to preserve them for future use. The Society has more than 35,000 rolls of microfilmed newspapers and 17,000 bound newspapers.

In 1973, the Society was chosen to participate in a pilot project of the United States Newspaper Project. At a cost of more than one million dollars, the goal of the Iowa Newspaper Project was to inventory, catalog, and microfilm all known existing Iowa newspapers from the 19th century to the present. Today, more than 1.2 million pages remain to be filmed. — Julie Seidler



### **Atention student editors!**

This issue of *The Goldfinch* contains eight errors throughout its pages, including typos, misspelled words, punctuation mistakes, and grammatical errors. Can you find them? They can be anywhere between pages 2 and 30. (Hint, you just read one!) Send us a letter and tell us where the mistakes are, and we'll send you a free prize! Send your letters to: *The Goldfinch* Ooops! Contest, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

## lowa's newspaper history

by Amy Ruth

ome historians have said that in lowa, "the press soon followed the plow." Between 1836 and 1860, almost 2,000 papers were started nationally; 200 in lowa. Most newspapers in lowa history have been small town weeklies.

In the mid 1800s, as Americans struggled with issues like slavery, publishers freely admitted to certain views and aligned themselves with political parties. They often started papers to advocate certain opinions. Newspaper names, such as the Fort Madison Democrat and the Hamilton Freeman gave clues to papers' politics.

In the 1850s and 1860s, innovations that reduced the cost of printing newspapers had reached lowa. This era was known as "the penny press." Instead of six cents (\$2.40 in today's money), a paper cost a penny (equivalent to 40 cents today). A small town could easily support two or three papers because many residents could afford to subscribe to at least one. By this time, the telegraph sent information over wires strung along railroad tracks. News now had a faster way of getting from one place to another.

After the Civil War (1861-1865), newspaper publishers were more responsible about reporting the news, instead of just advocating different viewpoints. This broader coverage attracted readers outside certain political parties and boosted circulation. Newspapers depended less on political funds and more on money from advertisers.

Between the 1870s and 1900s, cheaper forms of paper – called newsprint – were developed and decreased production costs.

At the turn of the century, rural delivery brought newspapers directly to homes in rural lowa. Newspaper circulation increased dramatically.

By 1907, there were almost 1,000 newspapers published in lowa; one for every 2,367 lowans.

The 1930s saw the decline of small town newspapers. Radio offered another way to receive the news. Newspapers now had to compete for advertising revenues with this new form of communication. The Great Depression created economic hardships and towns could no longer support multiple papers.

Today, there remain many tales about newspapering in lowa history. Take our tour through some of the more interesting stories and witness the twists and turns and ups and downs of journalism in tate's past.

Handwritten newspapers

o one knows for certain why three men in Washington, Iowa hand wrote newspapers when they could have used a printing press.

It may have been the high cost of printing equipment that led the editors to publish the handwritten *Quarterly Visitor, Domestic Quarterly Review*, and the *Shark* in the 1840s.

The editors probably published the papers to promote certain political views and to establish themselves as community leaders.

The content and layout were similar to printed newspapers and included articles, death and wedding announcements, weather reports, and literary works. A few copies of each issue were made and only wealthy citizens could afford them.

The fine penmanship of Samuel James, the editor of *Domestic Quarterly Review*, makes the one surviving copy (see below) fairly easy to read.

Handwritten papers were written in ink. The one surviving copy is housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City.

Died in this stare, on the 1st day of form He. A storne Shories of their Country, of the a shories thank of the St is much bonnered by all there a systemated with him. The come here in energy settlements of the term of ond has been shiriffed the bound of for four form the start will not only further with with

man, Helist behind him a blom

### **lowa's pioneer press**

Pioneer editors of the 1830s and 1840s were transient folks, starting newspapers in one town, then moving on when a paper failed. They set up shop in vacant buildings – including log cabins and mills. One publisher boasted he could run his press under a shady tree. Early newspapers were often one-person operations. The publisher worked as editor, reporter, printer, and business manager.

Newspapering was expensive. For the price of a press and start-up materials in 1840, a farmer could buy seven 160-acre farms.

Some citizens paid publishers a lump sum to establish a newspaper in their town. The money went for equipment and supplies.

In this time period, editors faced many hardships. Paper and other supplies, shipped on steamboats or overland in wagons, were often stranded by bad weather. Newspapers sometimes stopped publishing until supplies arrived. In the winter, ink froze overnight.

Early newspapers had fewer pages than today's papers and contained stories and poetry in addition to news about transportation, politics, agriculture, and frontier opportunities. Papers were expensive on the Iowa frontier. Sometimes, the most an average citizen could hope for was to read a copy of a paper that had been passed around town.

Slow and uncertain transportation systems meant subscribers sometimes never received their papers, or when the papers did finally arrive, the news was months old.

Editors suffered financial setbacks when subscribers did not pay their bills. Some editors published names of delinquent subscribers. Others required payment in advance or accepted certain goods in place of cash.

Many publishers supplemented their income by printing posters, tickets, and other items.

Despite hard times, pioneer editors persisted in their justic tasks to inform Iowans of local, state, and news.

### Boilerplate pages

he time-consuming process of setting type by hand (see page 6) was relieved by preprinted newspaper pages called "boilerplates" or "ready-mades."

A Midwestern entrepreneur introduced boilerplates during the Civil War. One side of the newspaper was printed with national news, advertisements, serialized fiction stories, and feature articles. The pages were sold to weekly papers across the country. Editors printed local news on the blank sides.

Editors liked ready-mades because they thought they impressed readers. Readers liked them because they often provided their only source of national and international news.

Iowa's weeklies depended on readymades between the 1860s and the turn of the century. By the 1920s, newspaper production had been simplified and ready-mades were no longer in high demand.

Today, the boilerplate product exists in wire stories. Wire articles are written by reporters who work for wire services, such as the Associated Press, then distributed electronically to newspapers worldwide.



cold in HEAD, SNUFFLES

Apply Balm into each nostrit.

An add for cold medicine from an 1890s ready-made page. Note the product must be mail ordered from New York state.

6

SHSI (lowa City)

#### Newspaper production

## Putting it toge

by Amy Ruth

Prior to the 1880s, every letter printed in a newspaper was handled individually. The work was done completely by hand and was time consuming. At the end of a day, a typesetter's feet, back, and shoulders ached from standing and stooping

#### Setting type by hand

Typesetters arranged metal letters and punctuation marks, called type, into words and sentences on a long rod called a composing stick, then placed the words in a large layout tray, called a galley. They arranged the words backwards because



These men are setting type in the 1940s. SHSI (Iowa City)

the mirror image would be printed on the page. Hours later, a page was completely typeset with articles and advertisements and ready to be inked down and placed on the press.

Once a page was printed, type from the galley was removed, washed, and put back into type drawers, like the one below.

Women and children often

worked as typesetters because their small, dexterous fingers moved swiftly and efficiently from drawer to galley.

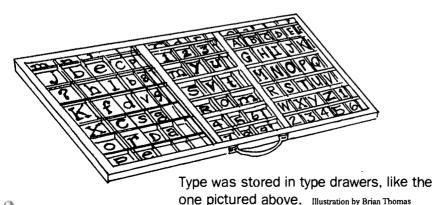
Some editors set type themselves, composing an article without first writing it down.

Before central heating, setting type by hand during Iowa's cold winter months was a hardship. Many editors published pleas for fuel donations to keep the newspaper office warm during production hours.

#### Machine-set type

In the 1880s, a machine was invented to set type. The Linotype was loud, hot, and dirty and required skilled operators.

Large daily newspapers could afford numerous machines.
Among small-town papers,



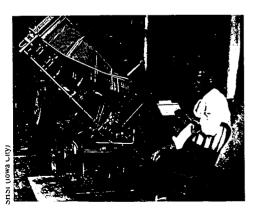
however, the technology was slow to catch on because it was so costly. Some small town editors were still setting type by hand into the 1940s and 1950s.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Jane and Martha Hinkle worked on the family newspaper. Their grandfather published the *Winfield Beacon* between 1881 and 1925, when their father took over.

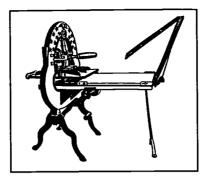
"The *Beacon* was part of our daily life from our earliest childhood," they wrote in 1981. "We helped sort type as soon as we could tell A from Z."

#### **Printing processes**

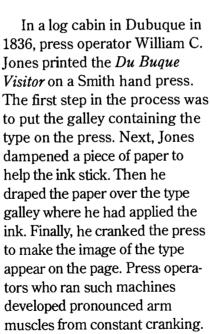
The earliest presses were hand operated and printed one page at a time.



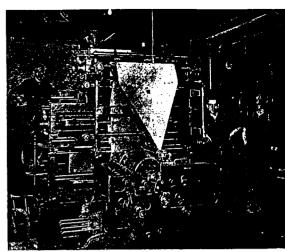
This boy operates a Linotype, c. 1910.



ABOVE: This hand press printed one sheet at a time. RIGHT: Steam-powered presses could print 25,000 papers an hour. SHSI (lowa City)



By the 1880s, when the Linotype machine set type, automatic steam rotary presses sped up the printing process.



These presses were powered by steam, instead of just human strength. Such mechanized presses printed thousands of papers per hour from a long roll of paper that was fed into one end of the press.

In the 1960s, a printing revolution took place when off-set printing was introduced. Typeset pages were photographed and the film used to make lightweight metal plates that could be chemically treated to hold the ink. This process made printing faster, cleaner, and more efficient. Off-set printing is still used today. Press operators no longer depend on muscle power or heavy metal printing plates to print newspapers.

## Newspapers tell History by Lin Ly

hink of Iowa history as a puzzle. The pieces are the basic parts of a newspaper, including advertisements, articles, editorials, illustrations, and photographs. Historic newspapers tell more than just the news of the day. Their parts piece together the story of Iowa's history – its people, places, things, activities, and events – and tell us what life was like for Iowans in the past.

Advertisements convey the types of businesses and employment opportunities which existed in the past but may not anymore. For instance, Tom Connolly's advertisement, "manufacturer of carriages, buggies and sleighs," in the July 23, 1885 issue of the *Dubuque Daily Times* is one that would not be found in today's newspapers.

Regular advertisements for heating coal, for example, tell us that Iowans once heated their homes with this fuel. When these advertisements disappeared from newspapers, we know coal was replaced

with other heating products.

Comparing past and present advertisements also may reveal how long a business has been open as well as economic changes, such as moving a business from a larger building to a smaller one to cut costs.

Commercial advertisements relate fashion styles and other trends and give clues about popular products. Ads for spats (a shoe covering) and trimmed hats tell us the kinds of products Iowans once purchased. By reading old newspapers, we also can discover how

Nuts cereal, Vicks Vapor
Rub, and Murine Eye
Drops are products that
exist today and are advertised in
newspapers and magazines and
They were also advertised in a

on television. They were also advertised in a 1920s *Burlington Hawkeye* newspaper, and probably in other papers throughout Iowa.

Advertisements for social events and other kinds of entertainment reveal popular recreational activities. We can learn how a community's entertainment scene changed as radio, film, and television were introduced into popular culture.

Technology not only brought new forms of entertainment, but also advancements in transportation and communication. Through old newspapers, we can experience the novelty of electricity, the telephone, and the automobile. Today, newspapers report advances in e-mail and on the World Wide Web. In 50 or 100 years, Iowans will look to newspapers published today to understand 1990s life.

Newspaper articles also convey political and legislative happenings and Iowans' reactions to laws and policies. In November

YOUR EYES

1920, a Burlington reporter interviewed area women who had been granted the Constitutional right to vote in a national election, and had voted for the first time. One woman said that within 12 years, women would no longer be interested in voting.

Another woman said that more women would run for public office.

Newspapers also include vital records about a community's

citizens. Today, historians and genealogists (people who study their family's history) read old newspapers looking for birth, marriage, and death notices.

Photographs published in old newspapers show how Iowa communities looked in the past. Pictures of homes, businesses, and other buildings show how styles have evolved. Changing architecture and civic improvements, like paved roads and traffic lights, indicate how Iowans adapted to modern lifestyles.

Just as they do now, illustrations in the past served as forums for political and social commentary. For example, early illustrations rarely portraved women beyond a newspaper's fashion and society pages. Today, women are represented in sports, business, and financial news and appear throughout the newspaper.

There are several reassurances that information in newspapers is accurate and reliable. First, the Constitutional protection of free speech and of the press discourages concealment of the truth. Second, certain laws restrain the press from printing false statements. To avoid printing incorrect information, newspapers often require contributors to provide their name and address so information can be verified. Reporters also attribute certain statements to sources in their articles.

When mistakes are printed. newspapers often run correction notices in order to keep the public confidence.

Newspapers are not only records of history but also mediums for publishing history. Local history articles began as com-

memorative features to celebrate

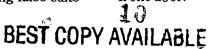
such events as the anniversary of a town's founding.

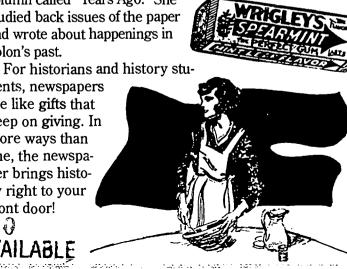
Today, many newspapers devote regular columns to local history. In Solon, Iowa in the early

1990s, teenager April Fleck, wrote a column called "Years Ago." She studied back issues of the paper

and wrote about happenings in Solon's past.

dents, newspapers are like gifts that keep on giving. In more ways than one, the newspaper brings history right to your front door!





Used for 70 Years

hru its use Grandmother outhful appearance

remained until youth har

secome but a memory

The soft, refined, pearly

white appearance it renders leaves the joy

of Beauty with you

## **Covering the community**

he community newspaper is like glue that binds a town together.

For more than 150 years, Iowa's small town weekly papers have provided news and services to subscribers. In 1918, Iowa had 768 weekly and bi-weekly newspapers. Today, as many

Surge arrow Patron Patron In Imma.

Organ:

Social Section Sec

Newspaper publishers were powerful community members. Publisher James Throop combined his photo with a page from his Mount Pleasant newspaper, around 1889. SHSI (Jowa City)

small towns have disappeared from the Iowa landscape and as Iowans' sense of community has broadened, that number has dropped to 298. Fewer and fewer of these papers are locally owned.

In community papers, citizens read about business

openings and closings and

local government news.

Newspapers provide a place for local groups to advertise their activities, and for citizens to publicize births, weddings, and deaths. And they're a place to learn what's on the school lunch menu and how the girls' basketball team scored against their arch rivals.

The opinions of community members are heard in letters to the editor, columns, and editorials.

While newspapers are important today, in Iowa's past – before telephones, television and radio news, and the Internet – newspapers were often the only source of news.

The local newspaper

connected a town's citizens with each other and also with the world outside the community. Readers looked for published steamboat arrivals and departures, and later train, bus, and plane schedules, to help them plan trips and order supplies for their homes and farms.

Newspaper offices of the past were gathering places. Townsfolk assembled there as often as they gathered in post offices and general stores. They came to report or hear the news, meet friends and neighbors, and pay their subscription bills – often with produce or fuel, much to the disappointment of publishers who needed cash to buy supplies.

Often, editors and publishers discouraged people from treating their offices as public meeting places. In 1859, a Hampton editor wrote the following rules for visitors to his office: "Enter softly, sit down quietly, say nothing interesting, don't talk to the printers."

Throughout Iowa's history, community newspapers have often been family businesses. Family members worked long





hours to ensure that the paper was published on time. Children started out sweeping the office floor and progressed to typesetting or writing. In the town of Glidden in western Iowa, I.A. Nichols and his sister ran the weekly *Glidden Graphic*. "I could gather the news, take care of the advertising, and do the press work alone," he wrote in his autobiography. "My sister came into the office and set type."

Small towns competed fiercely for county seat status and railroad depots – both would bring in money for the community.

Newspapers participated fully in these competitions. Articles and editorials bragged about their town's offerings.

#### **Newspaper business**

Newspapers are first and foremost businesses. Iowa's small town papers often started in county seats, where laws require that information of interest to the public, such as tax lists or bankruptcy notices, be published in a newspaper. The county government paid the paper to run these notices, giving publishers one certain and steady source of income.



During World War II, women took over the production of local papers. Dorothy Moeller, left, ran two weekly papers in Bremer County while her husband, Les, was overseas.

Weekly newspapers still compete today for the income generated by these notices.

Most papers earn their money from two sources: subscribers and advertisers.

In Iowa's past, the local newspaper was often the only way businesses could advertise goods and services. Newspaper advertising benefited many small towns in Iowa because it attracted shoppers from rural areas. The small town newspaper also provided a place for national companies to advertise their goods. Around the turn of the century, when rural delivery boosted mail-order sales, citizens in Iowa's small towns looked forward to reading about goods available nationally.

It's possible to learn a lot about what's important to a community

by reading ads in the local paper.

Newspaper publishers and editors throughout Iowa history have been powerful community members because they decide which news to print. And because they often worked as lawyers or in other professions and held public office, they sometimes chose to print only news that served their own interests and those of people like them. Today, newspaper editors and publishers work harder to print information that is important to many different kinds of people.

Community newspapers have important responsibilities. They inform, entertain, and educate: they carry news of tragedies and joy; they tie together townspeople and farm families; and they leave permanent records of lowa's communities.

PATBONIZE THOSE WHO SEEK YOUR BUSINESS



PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF THE COLORED PEOPLE

VOL. XLII NO. 46

ES MOINES, 10WA PRIDAY, APRIL 24, 1836

PRICE PIVE CENTS

Name five things you learn about *The Iowa Bystander* newspaper from its nameplate, pictured above.

## The fighting press

owa's first African-American newspaper was the *Colored Advance*, published briefly in Corning in 1882 by founder and editor C.S. Baker. Since then, African-American Iowans have produced more than 40 newspapers (mostly weekly publications) to cover happenings in their communities. Newspaper coverage stretched across the state – as far north as Mason City, as far west as Sioux City, and as far east and south as Keokuk.

The African-American press was often called the "fighting press" because it kept readers informed about civil rights issues and spoke out against discrimination. Readers learned about the accomplishments of African-American professionals, students, and athletes who were ignored by other newspapers simply because of their race. And African-American newspapers informed readers of births.

deaths, weddings, and other important events not published in white newspapers.

#### A well-known paper

Most African-American newspapers in Iowa have not survived for more than a few years because they lacked enough financial support from subscribers and advertisers.

But one newspaper survived despite the odds. One of the nation's longest-running African-American newspapers was The Iowa Bystander, established in 1894 by a few Des Moines businessmen. In 1922, Des Moines lawyer James B. "J.B." Morris, Sr. purchased the weekly paper and published it for almost 50 years. Morris' young grandsons, William, Brad, and Robert, often worked at the newspaper office hand-folding copies of the paper for distribution across Iowa. Years later, Robert and

William edited the paper for a brief time. The newspaper stopped publishing in 1987.

#### More than news

African-American newspapers provided more than news. They gave African-American Iowans experience as press operators, reporters, editors, and photographers. Young people earned money by delivering papers.

#### Moving on

In the 1960s and 1970s, more and more African Americans were hired at European-American newspapers. African-American newspapers, like *The Iowa Bystander*, lost talented employees. Today, African-American radio stations, magazines, and television programs, in addition to newspapers, continue the spirit and determination of the fighting press.  $\angle$ 

ERIC The Goldfinch

13



Use a mirror to complete this activity!

## Be a type detective

Typesetters once used blocks of type to lay out newspapers. They arranged words backwards and the mirror image appeared on the page. Hold this page up to a mirror to decipher each newspaper vocabulary word below. Write the word in the space given, and check out the definitions. (P.S. Look for these elements in *your* daily newspaper!)











(Time by which an assignment must be done)

(Line that includes date, paper name, page number)

(Paper's nameplate)









(List of a paper's staff members, printed in each issue of the newspaper)









(Title of an article)



(First paragraph of an article)

(Statement by a person published in the paper)

(Answers on page 30)

SEST COPY AVAILABLE

1

The Goldfinch 13

## Working the news

When it came to putting out a newspaper in lowa's past, all hands were needed for the many tasks involved in production and distribution. Young people have held prominent roles in getting out the news. Girls helped with typesetting, while boys served as printer's devils and newsboys.



The young printer's devil did most of the dirty work in the 19th and early 20th century newspaper offices, like the one above. SHSI (lowa City)

#### Printer's devil

midst the confusion and clutter of an early newspaper office, the printer's devil did the dirty work.

Young devils –
named for their inky
appearance at the end
of a long day –
mopped floors, picked
up scattered type,
cleaned out furnaces,
and scrubbed ink
rollers and presses.

Printer's devils also cleaned balls of sheepskin used for inking type. After use, the balls of dried sheepskin were soaked in pails, wrung out by hand, then layered with paper on the floor. The devil walked back and forth over the skin until it was clean and dry, replacing wet paper with dry

until the process was complete. The strong odor of the job stuck in the memory of the boys who cleaned the sheepskins between their feet and the floor.

Many boys who became printer's devils hoped to learn the craft of printing or writing.

Along with those who worked in other industries, printer's devils risked developing diseases, such as tuberculosis, from poor working conditions.



A cartoon drawing of a printer's devil



### **Kid publishers**

hen William Harold and Edward Chamberlain of Iowa City published their newspaper in the early 1900s, they were the youngest publishers in Iowa.

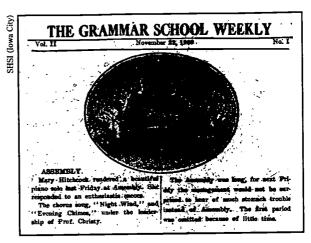
Measuring two by two inches, *The Grammar School Weekly* was said to be the smallest newspaper in the world.

Visiting a newspaper office sparked the brothers' interest in journalism. They convinced their mother, Irene Chamberlain who worked as a bookkeeper at an Iowa City printing house, to buy them a printing press. In 1908, the first issue rolled off the presses. William, 8, and Edward, 12, were in business. With a crew of neighborhood kids, the brothers covered school and other news. Subscribers

were expected to pay in advance.

The brothers' careers in journalism grew with them and they both became newspapermen.

Although the fate of The



Grammar School Weekly is unknown, we do know that the brothers left Iowa in their 20s to pursue journalism careers elsewhere.

### Newsboys

Newsboys hawked papers on street corners, working hard for a meager wage.

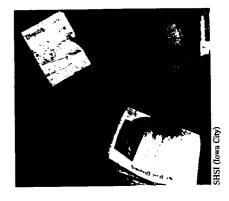
In 1898, about 200 newsboys in Des Moines went on strike. Strikers gathered outside the office of the *Daily News* to keep other boys from selling papers. At the time, newsboys had to buy the papers they sold. If they resold all the papers, they made a profit. If they didn't, they were stuck with the papers and no profit.

Isaac "Red" Oransky led strikers in their demand for a ction in the price the

newsboys paid for the paper. The story faded from public interest before a settlement was reported.

Norman Ross, a newspaper delivery boy in the 1930s, recalled delivering newspapers in Charles City along the city's longest route. Ross carried a heavy load but was often rewarded with a double dip of strawberry ice cream at the drugstore and a slice of gooseberry pie at the principal's house.

By 1935, Iowa established laws forbidding boys under 11



and girls under 18 from street occupations, including newspaper sales.

Today in Iowa, both boys and girls have paper routes, delivering the news one paper at a time.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

16



## Make a press operator's hat

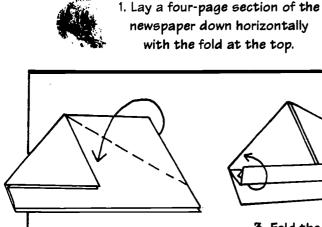
by Lin Ly

 ${f N}$  o history of Iowa newspapers would be complete without mention of the press operator's hat. Its history, however, is uncertain.

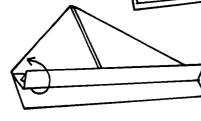
There is some disagreement in the newspaper publishing industry about why press operators around the turn of the century made these hats. Because running a press used to be a dirty job. some believe the hats were useful in keeping ink and paper dust out of the operator's hair. Others speculate that press operators had a lot of time in between printing jobs and making hats was a fun thing to do with material that was readily available.

When Iowa newspapers moved to offset printing presses in the 1960s, the printing process became much cleaner and faster. Today's press operators touch power buttons on computerized machines rather than inky printing plates.

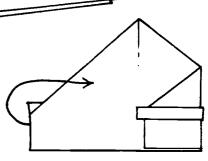
Technology may have swept away the utility of the press operator's hat, but it hasn't taken the fun out of making them. After you've read the history in today's newspaper, follow these easy steps to make your own press operator's hat and wear history on your head! You'll make a historic fashion statement!



2. Fold the top left corner to the center line. Do the same with the right top comer.

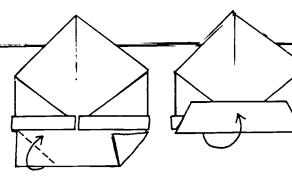


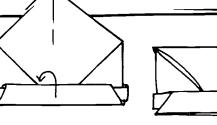
3. Fold the bottom edge of the top sheet to the base of the triangle and crease. Fold up again to form a hat band. Then turn over

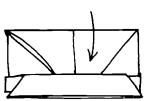


4. Fold the right edge to the center line. Do the same with the left side.









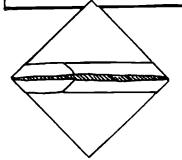
5. Fold lower right and left corners of the flap to the bottom of the hat band.

6. Fold entire lower flap above hat band.

7. Fold top of flap down and tuck into hat band.

8. Fold the top peak down to the bottom of the hat band and tuck inside the band.

Frank Foster models a newspaper

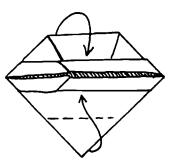


9. Pick up the hat.Open wide and flatten into a diamond.

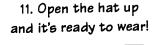


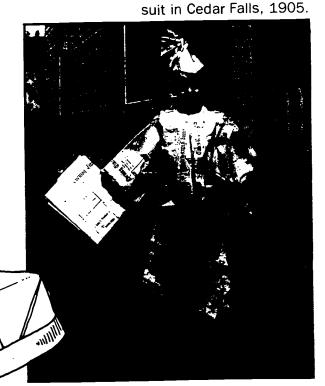
This activity was adapted with permission from the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*.

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley



10. Fold down the top and bottom peaks and tuck into hat band







#### A budding young lowa journalist asks:

## "Where are the pictures?"

by Millie K. Frese

t was a typical morning in Ottumwa, and 12-year-old Thomas Granger was running late for school. He picked up the morning paper on his way out the door to take a quick peek at the headlines, comics, and the sports page. Thomas planned to be a sports writer when he grew up.

But something was terribly wrong with this newspaper. He checked the date and the paper's name. May 11, 1836. The Du Buque Visitor! Where did this come from? Thomas wondered as he studied the columns of tiny type. No bold headlines. No illustrations or photos.



Woodcuts provided illustrations for early newspapers.

"Where are the pictures?" Thomas asked aloud, not really expecting an answer.

"My boy, newspapers didn't always have photographs and slick graphics!" said a voice behind him.

Thomas whirled around to see a man dressed in 19th century clothing.

"Wh- wh- who are you?" Thomas stammered.

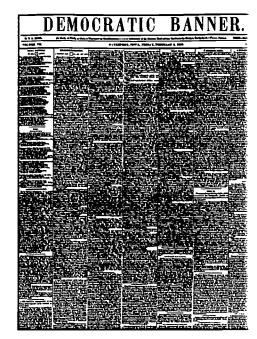
"I am John King, the publisher and editor of the paper you hold in your hands." When Thomas didn't reply, the man continued.

"Early newspapers were drab and gray – compared to what you're used to. Paper and quality ink were hard to come by back when I was an editor. It wasn't practical to use illustrations, although we occasionally used woodcuts."

Thomas found his voice. "Woodcuts?" he asked.

"Detailed drawings were printed in newspapers through a process of engraving the image by hand on a wooden block."

"What about photographs?"



Like many early papers, this Davenpopaper from 1855 carried few, if any, illustrations.

Thomas asked.

"Matthew Brady was a pioneer photojournalist during the Civil War," the old man continued. "Although a method for transferring photographs into print was a decade away, Brady's images were copied by artists. His pictures were reproduced in newspapers and told stories that the printed word could not match."

"Okay," said Thomas, growing impatient because he knew he was late for school, "so when do we get to the comics?" "Not until the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century. Typesetting machines, faster presses, color printing, and other advances paved the way for your comics. By 1893, *The New York World*, in New York City, had color presses and comics. By the early 1900s, Iowa's own *Des Moines Register* also was running comics."

"In the late 1890s," he continued, "methods were perfected for directly reproducing photographs in newspapers. The artist's world diminished as news photographers edged into their territory."

"Wow! It must have been cool to watch all those changes happen," Thomas exclaimed.

"Cool?" The old man looked puzzled. "Yes, I suppose it was cool in the winters. It was very sad, too, at times." The old journalist's voice trailed off.

"Some of those trusty old presses served generations of family printing businesses until they were no longer needed. Many newspapers changed over to powerful modern machines after World War II. Suddenly, there were no limits to the visuals a newspaper could publish."

"Today, newspapers flash with color and pictures, but they still do what they've been designed to do all along – put news into the hands of the people. The modern world is visually oriented, and today's papers – bursting with photos and illustrations – reflect that." The old editor sighed.

Thomas tried to imagine the future of newspapers.

"Maybe someday newspapers won't need paper at all!" he speculated. "Maybe the newspaper will be delivered to your own computer so you could download all the articles, comics, pictures, and graphics and look at them whenever you want!"

"Perhaps, young man," the old publisher chuckled. "But there's something about holding a newspaper in your hands. You can fold it up and take it with you. You can read it by candlelight when the electricity fails."

And with that, the old man walked away. Thomas rubbed his eyes, not sure if he had just met the publisher of Iowa's first paper or experienced a powerful daydream. Realizing he was very late, he sprinted towards school.

What am I going to tell Ms. Rodriguez? he worried.

Then he stopped and looked at the edition of the *Du Buque Visitor* sticking out of his math book. Smiling, he slowed his pace to a leisurely walk.

Maybe I won't have to explain after all. 🕰



Compare this "Blondie" comic from the 1930s to one in a 1990s lowa newspaper.



### More than words

by Julie Seidler

lowa journalists, such as photographer Joan Liffring-Zug Bourret and political cartoonist Ding Darling, have used their artistic talents to influence change – and the viewpoints of Iowa readers.



What is Darling's message in this 1929 cartoon published in the *Register?* 

The power of the political cartoon is its ability to simplify complex issues. Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling was a master at this craft. His career spanned more than 50 years, starting at the Sioux City Journal in 1902 and continuing at the Des Moines Register. At the Register, Darling was free to express his views in his cartoons, although his opinions were often different than those of the paper's publisher and editors. Throughout his career, Darling's cartoons touched on state, national, and international issues.

N ewspaper photographs sometimes bring about social change. In Iowa, Joan Liffring-Zug Bourret used her camera to document social inequalities.



Joan Liffring-Zug Bourret

Liffring-Zug Bourret began her photojournalism career in 1948. In the early 1960s, she began photographing the social conditions of lowa's minorities.

"When Dr. Percy Harris of Cedar Rapids could not find housing outside established ghetto neighborhoods in the early 1960s, my news tips and photographs for the Des Moines Register led to civil rights committees seeking and establishing greater employment and housing opportunities," said Liffring-Zug Bourret.

She photographed the Cecil and Evelyn Reed family of Cedar Rapids to break down stereotypes of African Americans. When he decided to run for public office, Reed credited Liffring-Zug Bourret for creating more opportunities for lowa's minorities.

Liffring-Zug Bourret's photographs of Mexican migrant workers showed the poor living conditions of these laborers. When her photos were published, Muscatine agencies worked together to improve the quality of life for these workers.

"Through the images of my camera," Liffring-Zug Bourret said of her career, which continues today, "I have been privileged to share in the lives of many lowans."





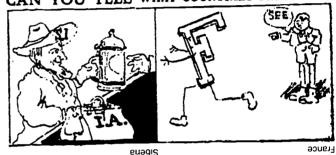


The king attachés his royal real to a document.

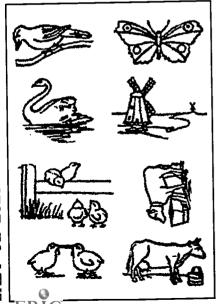
### Something for everyone

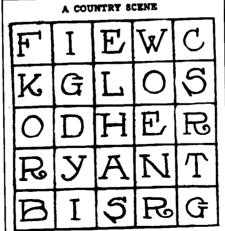
n the first issue of the Jefferson Era, published in Jefferson, Iowa in 1866, editors vowed to "endeavor to resent something, in each issue, that will be interesting nd useful to all. Newspapers throughout the state made imilar promises to attract more readers. Special prerinted pages for women and children were popular in the ate 1800s and early 1900s. These pages were mass produced and sold to newspapers across the country. The Goldfinch checked out kids' pages published in the Des Moines Register in the early 1900s. Here's what we found.

### CAN YOU TELL WHAT COUNTRIES THESE ARE?



### **PUZZLEDOM**





THE following things are found in the country:
Hay, Hens, Daisy, Grasa, Bird, Treea, Cowe,
Brook, Field, Dog, Ant. You may move up, down
and slanting, but you must not akin. You may use
the same letters move than once. Now see whether
you can find them.



"If thou art borrowed by a friend, Right welcome shall he be. To read; to study, not to lend, But to return to me.

"Not that imparted knowledge Doth diminish learning's store, But books, I-find, if too oft lent, Return to me no more.

"Read elewly, pause frequently, Think seriously, return duly, With the corners of the leaves Not turned down."

## What's the story?

Three lowa newspapers reported differently on the same event in 1905. After reading the article and studying the headlines, answer the discussion questions.

## FRED A. HARRIMAN MEETS DEATH IN AUTO WRECK.

Was Prominent Lawyer and Capitalist and Hampton's Most Progressive Citizen. His Sudden Demise Casts a Shadow of Gloom Over the Community. Funeral Services to be Held at His Home Thursday Afternoon at 2:30 O'clock.

The Franklin County Recorder,
October 4, 1905

# WEALTHY MAN IS KILLED BY AUTO

FRED A. HARLIMAN OF HAMPTON VICTIM OF ACCIDENT.

LOST CONTROL OF MACHINE

THROWN UNDERNEATH AUTO AT BOTTOM OF GULLY.

 The Des Moines Register and Leader, September 30, 1905

## FRED A. HARRIMAN KILLED BY AUTO

VIÇTIM IS WELL KNOWN IN FORT DODGE, AS HE HAS OFTEN VISITED HERE.

The Fort Dodge Messenger,September 30, 1905

hen Fred A. Harriman was killed in a car accident near Hampton, Iowa in 1905, he became the first Iowan to die in an accident caused by the new horseless carriage.

Reporters gathered facts and quotes and relayed the story to their readers. Their articles in the *Franklin County Recorder* (Hampton's weekly newspaper), the *Fort Dodge Messenger*, and the *Des Moines Register and Leader* And daily papers) show that

journalists sometimes have difficulty getting the story straight. The journalists gathered and reported conflicting information about the purpose of the trip, the number of passengers, and how Harriman died.

The Franklin County Recorder (Harriman's hometown paper) reported that Harriman and four other officials of the Franklin County State Bank left Hampton at the end of the work day in Harriman's car. The men were headed to Geneva to take over a

bank they had purchased. "At 9 o'clock, having completed their work, they started on their return trip to Hampton," the newspaper reported.

The Fort Dodge Messenger, however, reported that Mr. Harriman and two other men were "enjoying a ride through the country." The Des Moines paper published an almost identical account.

at the end of the work day in

Harriman's car. The men were headed to Geneva to take over a papers. The Recorder reported,

EKIC The Goldfinc

"When coming down the steep hill... three miles south of town, the auto speeding along at the rate of probably thirty miles an hour, Mr. Harriman, who was steering the machine, evidently lost control... and it ran off the grade." The right front wheel struck a bridge which "threw the auto and its occupants clear across the span." It then turned around and landed on its side in a six-foot embankment.

According to the *Recorder* article, "It is thought that the severe concussion following the striking of the machine against the bridge was responsible for this death as no bones were broken and his body showed less bruises than any one of the others received."

The Messenger and the Register and Leader reported the accident differently. Both reported that "As they were descending a steep hill Harriman seemed to have lost control of his machine. It struck the edge of a bridge at the bottom of the hill and pitched into the gully fifteen feet below. . . . Harriman landed under the machine and was crushed to death."

brief examples demon-

strate that newspapers sometimes print inconsistent news. For correct information about an event in the past or the present, readers must review many sources, then decide for themselves what is true and what is false.

#### Reporting on deadline

Time and proximity complicate newsgathering and can lead to inconsistent news articles, such as the ones about the Harriman accident.

Reporters working for weekly newspapers have time before deadlines to interview multiple people and check information with officials. Journalists working at daily papers sometimes only have a few hours to investigate and report a story.

Newsgathering can be like playing the game "Telephone," where a message is whispered from one player to the next until the message is nothing like the original. Sometimes journalists play a version of the telephone game, relying on information provided by people who heard the story from someone else, rather than talking directly to a witness. This may be what

happened in the coverage of the Harriman car accident.

#### Reporting close to home

When an event such as the Harriman accident happens locally, the community paper will allow a lot of space for coverage. Readers want to know about happenings that affect their friends and neighbors. Harriman's hometown paper published a long article with details of the accident as well as information about Harriman because he was a prominent Hampton citizen. Since he was less well-known in Fort Dodge (over 50 miles away) or Des Moines (over 80 miles), the stories published in these papers were much shorter.

## ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS

- Why did only one newspaper print the date, time, and location of Harriman's funeral?
- Why didn't the Des Moines paper use Harriman's name in its first headline?
- O Why were people in Fort Dadge interested in what happened to Harriman?



Winner of the 1997 "Write Women Back into History Contest" sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women.

### Sidney, lowa: Who would have guessed?

by Abby Cox, Sidney, Iowa

s I sit in church and gaze around, I see a modestly dressed, neat, and proper lady. Just looking at her, I wouldn't believe all of the people's lives she has touched and all of her accomplishments. Her name is Evelyn Birkby and she lives in Sidney, Iowa.

While interviewing her, she gave me two quotes that she has tried to keep in mind during her life. The first one is, "take more from life than life takes from you." The second quote is "bloom where you are planted."

During her high school years, Evelyn Corrie met her future husband, Robert Birkby. After high school, Evelyn went to Chicago to be a teacher.

On a July day, Evelyn came back to Sidney from Chicago and became reacquainted with Robert. On July third, at a picnic, Robert proposed. They were married November 3, 1946.

When she married Robert, she moved out to his farm. She are raised in town so she didn't

know how to be a farm wife. She and Robert had four children. Robert realized that with Evelyn's educational background and her upbringing as a town girl, she might be very bored on the farm. Just then there was an ad asking for a farm wife to write a column in the Shenandoah newspaper once a week. She wrote a letter to the newspaper and they liked her. So they took her! The editor told her there were many lonely people reading her column, so make it personal. He also told her to always include a recipe. He told her that is the only thing some people would read. So she started writing. That was in 1949!

Her column only touched the number of people who read the newspaper. Her column was such a success that she was noticed by KMA, a radio station. They contacted her and wanted her to do a homemaker program. She jumped at the opportunity to touch a wider range of people. People out on the farms would

listen faithfully. The radio was the only contact they had with other people except for their own family members. Evelyn would share the lives of her own family with the listeners. The listeners would write letters asking about recipes, housework, and children. Evelyn would answer these letters on the air.

Evelyn left KMA in 1990. The very popular homemaker programs went off the air soon after because there were fewer farm families to listen.

Evelyn plans to continue touching lives. She most definitely plans to continue to bloom where she is planted.

As the organ plays and people start filing out of church, I see out of the corner of my eye people stopping to talk to Evelyn. I wouldn't have ever guessed she had written a newspaper column all her life and talked on the radio for 40 years. I never would have guessed!



## **Emma makes news**

by Jen Golay

"It's not fair!" Eleven-year-old Emma Larson stomped her foot on the kitchen's wooden floor. "Why doesn't William have to do his chores? I never get out of my housework."

"William is 14 and in high school now," Mama explained gently. "He needs some extra time this morning to prepare for his history examination." Her children's learning was important to Mama. When her family moved from Norway to Decorah, Iowa, she went to work cleaning houses to help support her family. She had no time for school.

"I'm sorry, Mama. It just seems like Will gets to do everything that I can't." Emma hoped this apology would soften Mama.

"Your turn will come,
Emma. You must be patient,"
Mama said. She carried the
breakfast dishwater to the door
and splashed it on the ground.
Emma knew that many of the
houses in town had indoor
plumbing. Sometimes Emma
felt like her family lived in pioneer days instead of the modar of 1903.

"In the meantime, get busy with those chores!" Emma knew better than to argue when Mama used that tone of voice.

Emma stomped to the chicken coop. Her hands moved slowly as she daydreamed.

"Hurry up, Emma! We'll be late for school!" Will hollered.

"I wouldn't be late if I didn't have to do your chores on top of mine!" Emma yelled back. She hurried into the house where she grabbed her books and lunch pail.

"Bye, Mary," Emma kissed her baby sister, who was sitting in her high chair smashing her breakfast with a spoon.

t's my turn to pick the story, Papa," William said as he settled on the braided rug in front of the fireplace.

"No," Papa said. "It's Emma's turn to choose. You chose last night." It felt good to Emma that Papa remembered her.

"You know I always like it when you read from the *Posten*, Papa," Emma smiled at her father. Since it was written in Norwegian, Papa always read parts of the paper to the chil-



dren, translating it into English. Emma knew the *Posten* was an important newspaper to her people. It reminded them of their roots.

"Read about Kristine," pleaded Emma. This month, the *Posten* was printing chapters from a book called *Kristine: En fortaelling fra Valdres* (*Kristine: A Tale from Valdres*). Emma could hardly wait to learn Kristine's fate.

When Papa finished reading, Emma felt sleepy and content. The unfairness of the morning was forgotten. Mama

tucked Emma into bed and she fell asleep immediately.

Emma dreamed of springtime. The sun shone brightly on the green hills that hugged Decorah in their arms. She heard birds singing as she ran through the forest. Suddenly, the sun went dark. Emma kept running. It was hard to breathe. She fell down coughing and panting. Her eves popped open. Her coughing and panting were no longer part of her dream: they were real. Emma's eyes burned and she saw a shaky glow in her doorway.

"Fire!" she screamed. "Fire! The house is on fire!" She jumped out of bed and jammed her feet into her shoes. "Mama! Papa! William! Our house is on fire!" She snatched Mary from her crib and grabbed a blanket from the chair to cover the baby's face. Mary awoke, surprised by Emma's rough handling. Emma heard Will climb down from his loft bedroom.

"Here Will," screamed Emma. "Take Mary, I want to save my doll. She's on the bed."

The children ran down the stairs, out of the house, and away from their burning home. Mama and Papa stumbled after them.

Papa and the neighbors formed a bucket brigade to put out the fire. Mama and the children shivered in the cold morning air. "Oh Will," Mama cried, "I'm so glad you remembered Mary."

The Larson's home did not burn completely, but the first floor was severely damaged. The Larsons went to stay with their neighbors, the Brandts, until the house was repaired. Christian Brandt, the eldest son, often reported local news for the *Posten*. When he heard about the Larson's fire, he knew he had an important story to write.

"Tell me everything," Christian demanded of William.

"Well," Will began.

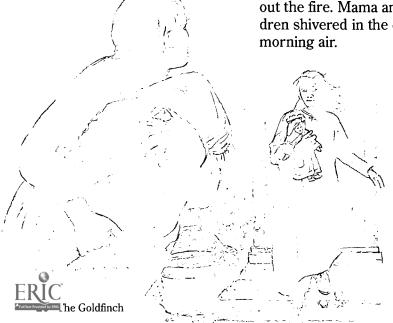
"I was dreaming," Emma interrupted.

"Emma, you're too young," Christian said impatiently. "I want to hear from Will."

"Tell Christian how you carried Mary out of the house, William," Mama said.

"You rescued your baby sister?" Christian exclaimed, scribbling furiously.

Emma needed to be alone. Suddenly, she no longer cared whether she ever saw the newspaper again. Even the story of Kristine, the girl from Norway, didn't seem to matter anymore.



he next week when the Posten was delivered. Emma didn't even want to look at it. After supper Emma asked Papa to tell the story about when he took the big boat from Norway to America.

"But Emma," said Papa, "I think I should read Christian's story about William. Don't you?"

"No! I don't want to hear it!" cried Emma as she ran out of the Brandt's kitchen.

"What's wrong with Emma?" Mama asked.

"Maybe she's still upset about the fire," said Christian. "It must have been awfully frightening to her. Thank goodness William got her out of the house."

"But it was Emma who woke me up!" cried Will. "She's the one who carried Mary downstairs."

"No, Will," Mama said. "I saw you carrying Mary out of the house."

"That's because Emma handed her to me so she could save her doll."

"William!" exclaimed Christian. "Why didn't you tell me this before I wrote the story? Now my article is inaccurate."

"You didn't ask me," Will said. "I think I'll go talk to Emma."

"Fmma," said Will softly as



were staving.

Emma sniffed. "I don't feel like talking. And I don't want to hear the story. Please tell Papa to read it without me."

"Papa's not reading the story. I told them it was wrong," he said.

Emma was puzzled.

"I told them you carried Mary down the stairs. You woke me up. You are the real hero," Will said.

Emma turned around to face her brother. "You did?"

"Yes. And Christian is angry with me. He says I ruined his story. But no one ever asked me. Everyone just assumed. And I admit that it was nice to get the attention." Will looked at the floor.

"It's not important," sighed Emma, "What matters is that we are all safe. Still, no one will ever know the truth."

"For she's a jolly good fellow!" everyone sang as Emma walked into the schoolroom the next day. Emma gasped.

"Three cheers for our hero, Emma Larson," someone cried. "Will told us you saved your family from the fire. We're so proud of you. Why didn't you say something?"

Emma smiled to herself as she thought of William. "No one asked me!" she said.

28

and performers. The students included copies of ads on the CD-ROM.

One group researched communication methods – including newspapers. These students discovered that their paper was one of the last weekly newspapers to be established in Iowa, waiting until 1888 to begin publishing. They also learned that the newspaper had once been called *The Central City News-Letter* and had merged with another paper.

They incorporated this information into the CD-ROM along with historic photographs of the newspaper office and staff.

Some students read old newspapers on microfilm at the Cedar Rapids Library and decided they preferred this method to looking at originals.

Christopher McAtee, 11, and others in his group were nervous looking at the original papers because they were so delicate.

The students are glad that today's copies of the paper are saved on microfilm. They know *The Linn News-Letter* of the 1990s will teach future generations about Central City's history.

#### The same, but different

While doing their research, the students noticed differences between newspapers of yesterday and today.

"Today's paper will stay together and the old ones fall apart if you even barely touch it," said Andrea McNamara, 11.

"And today's papers have more photos and pictures," added Lindsey Shoop, 12.

The students all recognized the importance of saving newspapers. "The old copies of the newspaper are important," said Nick Booth, 12, "in case someone wants to find research on the town in a certain year."

"It's important to know the history so you know how the town has grown," added Jaime Heck, 12.

Thanks to the hard work of these Central City students, the town's history has been preserved for future generations to study and enjoy.

To research their town's history, the students investigated historic and current newspapers. Some of the information they collected was included on their CD-ROM.









The Goldfinch 29

### **Answers**

#### Be a type detective (page 13):

- Deadline
- 2 Folio
- Flag
- Byline
- Masthead
- 6 Headline
- 2 Lead
- Quote

### **Attention teachers!**

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